

# The Shakespeare Newsletter

VOL. 1, NO. 5

"Knowing I lov'd my books, he furnish'd me . . ."

October, 1951

## SHAKESPEARE STAGE SOCIETY FORMED

ANOTHER milestone in the movement toward neo-Renaissance staging has been passed with the formation of The Shakespeare Stage Society in London. Under the Chairmanship of Leonard Crainford and the direction of C. B. Purdom the eminent Shakespearean author and director, the Society has for its object the encouragement of the production of Shakespearean plays in the manner in which they were written, and the encouragement of the production of plays on open stages. By "open stage" the Society refers to stages which are not separated from the auditorium by a frame or proscenium arch.

Although the Society advocates the rebuilding of the Globe Theatre for educational and experimental purposes, its main object is to draw the attention of builders and producers to the advantages of open stages, to secure observance of its principles—the recognition of stage and auditorium as a single unit, and to foster the conception that the audience is a constituent part of the dramatic performance. Papers will be prepared by members of the Society and discussions will be held. The Society expects to issue a quarterly publication on the Shakespearean Stage which will publicize its views and findings.

### Purdom's *Macbeth*

The Society's first production, *Macbeth*, was staged from May 14th to May 19th at Crosby Hall, a fine example of Tudor architecture built in 1466. A masque was presented before Queen Elizabeth in this Hall in 1594. Produced in its entirety from the First Folio version of the play, *Macbeth* was acted in two hours and twelve minutes. Of the production Purdom wrote:

"I have aimed at concentrating attention upon the dramatic values of the play, presenting it not as a record of historical events but as a vision, that is, a poetical work created in the terms of the imagination of the leading character. In this way I hope that the play may be seen as it was written, bearing the sense it had when it left Shakespeare's hand.

"In approaching the play I do not try to imagine myself to be a Jacobean. I ask, What has *Macbeth* to say to us? If the question can be answered, we shall know what it had to say to Shakespeare's audience, which is what is meant by his being a dramatist for all time. In this way, I think, we meet the play with consciousness of its living content; if that cannot be done, the play is dead and we can leave it to the antiquarians. I treat its production and the stage on which it is now performed in the same way. I am not concerned with the past, but with the drama and its immediate significance. . . . I am prepared to maintain that this is how, more or less, the play was originally performed in a building of the period, without attempting to revive the Jacobean theatre or acting methods, of which we know too little."

A reviewer noted that limitations of the Hall, amateur players, and overconcentration on staging hampered the initial production.

## BERNARD MILES FOUNDS MERMAID THEATRE

On what Roy Walker, Shakespearean critic of the *Theatre Newsletter* (London) has called "the most beautiful stage I have ever seen," the recently formed Mermaid Theatre group under the direction of Bernard Miles presented twenty performances of *The Tempest* which enchanted the audience. The performance was said to be far superior to the Stratford and Cambridge productions recently seen. The latter production was the University offering of the Davenant-Dryden version which held the stage from the Restoration until Macready ran the original version for 55 nights in 1838. Garrick's attempts at revival of the original in 1757 were unsuccessful.

Bernard Miles apparently conceived the idea of an apron stage when he developed a taste for closer contact with the audience during performances on open decks, gun turrets, and bare platforms slung between destroyers of the Royal Navy. A Ronald Watkins performance of *I Henry IV* at Harrow in 1947 convinced him that the Royal Navy and Shakespeare were right and that Stanislavsky's and Macready's strictures against contact with the audience were wrong.

### The Mermaid Stage

The Mermaid stage is set up in a reconstructed Hall—once the assembly Hall of St. John's Wood School—in the garden of the Miles' home. Its form and decoration are the joint effort of C. Walter Hodges and Michael Stringer the historian and designer who have been largely inspired by Prof. John C. Adams' reconstruction of the Globe Theatre, but yet have burst away from the Globe concept into a much freer design.

Although not intended to reproduce any particular Elizabethan theatre, the stage is one on which Elizabethan actors would have felt at home. It is entirely portable, has a tiring house, traps, and a large apron.

The Mermaid Theatre production of *The Tempest* was highly praised as an experiment and as a finished product. Critics have agreed that not only must there be a return to Shakespeare's texts and continuous staging, but there must be a return to Elizabethan conceptions of poetry.

## ENGLISH INSTITUTE MEETS AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Professor Francis Fergusson of Princeton University and Professor Harold Wilson of the University of Toronto presented Shakespearean papers for discussion at the tenth annual session of The English Institute at Columbia University last September.

Professor Wilson's paper, "Cymbeline and Philaster: The Analogy of Structure," was read at the first Conference which met to discuss, *Sources and Analogues in Criticism*. A précis of the Toronto professor's paper prepared by the author especially for SNL follows:

### Shakespeare and Fletcher

In *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare* (1901), Professor A. H. Thorndike argued that Shakespeare's dramatic romances followed the fashion set by the younger dramatists in the new genre of the heroic romance. This contention rests principally upon the resemblances he finds between *Philaster* and *Cymbeline* and upon the assumption that the former preceded the latter in composition and stage production. But Professor Thorndike's argument neglects important differences between the two plays—in thought, structure, method of conducting the action, characterization, and stage effects. This paper contends (1) that the differences between the two plays are more significant than the supposed resemblances—that the plays are fundamentally unlike in conception, execution, and effect; (2) that the best analogy for *Cymbeline* is provided, not by *Philaster*, but by some of Shakespeare's own earlier plays; (3) that the best analogy for *Philaster* is in the other plays of Beaumont and Fletcher and especially Fletcher's *Fairful Shepherdess*.

As part of the conference on *Aristotle's Poetics and Modern Criticism* Professor Downer read a paper which discussed "Hamlet as the Imitation of an Action." The SNL could not procure a report on the paper which will appear next year among the *English Institute Essays*.

The third Conference, centered around the *Problems in Editing a Mass of Manuscripts*, was directed by Louis B. Wright and Giles E. Dawson of The Folger Shakespeare Library, but no Shakespeare paper was read.

Professor Alan S. Downer of Princeton, Secretary of The English Institute, writes that in spite of efforts to limit attendance to 170, there were 192 registrants. The larger attendance did not inhibit "the discussion of the larger problems of methods and approaches to literary scholarship and critical study" which is the reason for presenting the papers.

## The Shakespeare Newsletter

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**"Knowing I lov'd my books..."**

Receipt of a letter from Professor Harold C. Bohn of the State Teachers College of Montclair, N. J. which contained a subscription for himself and thirteen students once again prompts the suggestion that teachers offer their students the opportunity to subscribe to *The Shakespeare Newsletter*.

Whether or not your students are majors in the Renaissance or specialists in Shakespeare the *SNL* has much to offer. Shakespeare is a microcosm of literature and Shakespearian study presents a microcosm of criticism. Whether the approach be biographical, bibliographical, historical, social, cultural, neocritical, psychological, philosophical, or dramatic, its exponents are found in the realm of Shakespearean literature and are represented in the pages of the *SNL*. In addition to original articles, literary history, book and drama reviews, miscellaneous notes, and precis of lectures, sixty-two scholarly and popular articles have already been summarized.

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***he furnished me."***

A letter from a Columbia professor who was disconcerted at receiving issues of *SNL* without having subscribed prompts some additional remarks. Members of the faculties of well over a hundred colleges and nearly one hundred libraries have found *SNL* important enough to send a dollar or more for subscription. *SNL* is being mailed to several thousand Shakespearians with the hope that its readers may find it interesting and valuable enough to become regular subscribers. If you have already decided that *SNL* can not serve your interests, the editor would sincerely appreciate a post card to that effect. If no word is heard may he assume that you will subscribe shortly? Your editor will gladly assume the financial burden if he knows that you will eventually cooperate in making the *SNL* self-sufficient.

***The Shakespeare Newsletter***

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**THE STRATFORD LECTURES**

UNDER the direction of John Garret, Head-Master of the Bristol Grammar School, a series of eighteen lectures by eminent Shakespeareans was presented at the British Council Centre, Mason Croft, in Stratford, from August 23rd to September 1st. The purpose of the lectures, addressed to teachers and miscellaneous visitors, was to remedy the "lamentable state of affairs" which forces many to claim that they learned to hate Shakespeare at School.

The following reports of the lectures are summarized or presented verbatim from the highly praised accounts written by Ruth Ellis, drama editor of the *Stratford-Upon-Avon Herald* with the kind permission of Rupert Boyden, Editor.

**"SHAKESPEARE AND THE SCHOOL"***by Charles Wrinch*

The problem of making children attend properly may be met by rousing their interest in country imagery, by seeing professional theatrical and movie performances, and by choric reading in the class during which the teacher is to function as the director. A proper background in ballads and mythology is necessary. Participation in the joys of rhythmic country dancing is excellent preparation. It might be "a good idea to make Shakespeare a forbidden subject, so that children would find him out for themselves." The best approach for children was through characters or episodes; every sentence might be a moving picture. "Teachers should so refresh their own imaginary forces in Stratford that they could evoke them in their pupils."

**"SHAKESPEARE AND THE MIDDLE AGES"***by Geoffrey Templeman*

"Shakespeare drew his historical information from Tudor chroniclers who were typical of their age, inspired by national pride and Protestant patriotism, finding what they wanted to see in the past." A review of 14th century history indicated that that period "was a time of confusion and disorder, with the beginning of the discontent with the established order that finally boiled over in the 15th century."

**"FROM PRINCE TO KING"***by John Garrett*

"Shakespeare clearly had a passion for order and degree in political life, based on the medieval system of universal order and degree in political life, broken only by man's sin. Henry IV was harassed by guilt within and rebels without, but his admission of guilt seemed to defer the curse from his son, Henry V, who undertook an unjust war against France to obscure his own dubious claim to the throne. The two parts of "Henry IV" were really one play, with Prince Hal's repentance as the climax. Hal's first soliloquy was cold, cynical, neither attractive nor generous, and was inexplicable unless the rejection of Falstaff was in view from the beginning. But we had to remember that Hal emerged from his coronation as from a mystical experience of dedication, and Falstaff's intervention could not have been worse timed. Hal, in bidding farewell to that part of his life, made provision for Falstaff.

"Opinion about Hal varied so enormously,

because everyone thought of him as a living person. The speaker felt that he was like other politically successful men, and the interest lay in the contest between the King and the human being in him, for he was bruised and shaken with the weakness of humanity, in spite of being the colossal figure of an ideal king."

**"FALSTAFF"***by J. Dover Wilson*

Falstaff was an enormous subject "but not everybody's cup of tea." *Henry IV* "was the most entertaining play Shakespeare ever wrote," with Part II inexplicable without Part I. "Its problems, like others, made good material for examination questions, but would not occur to those who went to the stage instead of the study.... It was a monarchical, political, morality play, with Falstaff as the Vice or Devil tempting the prodigal Prince. The final rejection was prepared for in Part II, where Prince Hal appeared little except in the great scene of his father's death-bed.... Shakespeare inherited the framework in an old play, and Hal's first soliloquy was really a kind of prologue, not to be regarded as psychologically consistent with the rest of Hal." The mock-pathetic, mock-repentant strain in Falstaff "might have been inherited from the original Sir John Oldcastle, a Puritan friend of Henry of Monmouth, who, after he became Henry V, burnt Oldcastle at the stake for heresy." Hal was a Lollard in his youth but returned to the Church. "The chroniclers showed Oldcastle as a misleader of youth, shifting from the moral to the doctrinal plane, so that Falstaff's mock repentance might go back to the original Puritan character." Falstaff's increasing arrogance after Shrewsbury makes us begin "to laugh at him as well as with him, and the tavern scenes had a different atmosphere owing to the introduction of Doll Tearsheet. The significant appearance of the Lord Chief Justice showed Henry as a king under the law. The actual rejection of Falstaff was much misunderstood. Henry had to put on the whole burden of kingship, as seen in constantly recurring speeches in all the history plays—a theme which was in itself, a subtle flattery of Queen Elizabeth."

A Wilsonian note was added by his interpretation of the babbling "of green fields" as Falstaff's hoarse singing of the 23rd psalm. Perhaps Falstaff had been a choir boy in his youth.

(To be continued)

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**The Macmillan Co., N. Y.**

**APOCALYPSE—1957**

by Rev. H. Cotton-Smith

Coming from Stratford on Avon in 1937, after the performance there of *The Merchant of Venice*, the rail car was full of the usual discussion of the Baconian theory. My idea was to listen and say nothing, which for a time was also the attitude of an elderly lady sitting opposite. But at last she flung patience and silence out of the window and a challenge into the arena in these words—"A plague on both your houses. I come from a house where we have MSS. which show that neither Shakespeare nor Bacon wrote the earlier plays, and in twenty years we shall release the facts." That settled the matter and we all settled down to await 1957. But who was the lady? By Sherlock Holmes tactics I discovered that the lady lived at Althorp Hall, the residence of the Spencers. Whether housekeeper, librarian, or secretary, or a Ladyship, one failed to elicit. But one wondered if her cryptic bombshell signified that Edmund Spenser, who often stayed at Althorp, composed the earlier plays written before 1599, leaving the rest to someone else. One looks forward to the forthcoming Apocalypse.

Nettleham, Lincoln, England

**THEATRE NEWSLETTER**

The *Theatre Newsletter* of London, dedicated to the high ideals of theatre art rather than show business and the only publication of its kind in the world, is to be congratulated on the successful completion of its fifth year of informative and influential publication. Its twenty-five issues each year are packed with stimulating articles and critical reviews by authoritative writers who very adequately cover the field in a country that has, proportionately, more theatrical activity than any other nation. Roy Walker the chief Shakespearean contributor is well known in the United States through *The Time is Free*, a study of *Macbeth*, and *The Time is Out of Joint*, a study of *Hamlet*. Subscription to the eight page fortnightly is \$2.75 and may be

**HAMLET'S DELAY**

by Harold R. Hutcheson, Lake Forest College

"I do not know

Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do.'" (IV. iv. 43)

THE tragedy of Hamlet lies in its presentation of a problem from which there is no escape and to which there is no solution of any sort. Why does Hamlet delay killing the King? Because killing the King will not solve his problem, and the solution of that problem is the one object on which Hamlet's mind is exclusively, though hopelessly, bent. What is that problem?

Hamlet is a scholar, a philosopher, an idealist. The father whom he idealizes has died, and the mother to whom he is devoted ("O throw away the worser half") has quickly married the uncle whom he detests. Quite apart from any question of murder, this situation is one that Hamlet is completely unable to accept. He broods over it, and brooding intensifies his reverence for his father, his desperate pain on his mother's account, and his loathing of his uncle. Whether you now accept the Ghost as a real creature giving Hamlet necessary factual confirmation for his "prophetic soul", or whether you psychologize the Ghost as symbolizing the inner workings of Hamlet's mind, makes very little difference. The fact in either case is that he concludes the King murdered his father. This conclusion, a correct one (for if it were not correct the play would be a melodrama, not a tragedy), consummates the irremediable poisoning of Hamlet's world. His father, totally good, has been the victim of one of the ugliest types of murder, fratricide, perpetrated by his uncle, totally bad. Within a month of the death of her good husband, the Queen has married the evil King. The antithesis between Hamlet's ideal world and the situation into which he is plunged is absolute. His poisoned father is a tortured ghost. His poisoned uncle rules. His mother has dirtied herself unspeakably, letting the bloat King paddle in her neck with his damned fingers. Ophelia! "I did love thee once." How can he love anyone now? His mother's turning from a celestial bed to prey on garbage has poisoned all love. "I loved you not." Like the blood in *Macbeth*, the beasts in *King Lear*, the black

and white in *Othello*, poison runs through Hamlet as the *leitmotif* that furnishes the physical symbol for the psychic theme. Hamlet and his entire family die by poison.

This, then, is Hamlet's problem—to cleanse his world of the virulent poison that has entered it. Unless he can do this, his life holds no meaning for him. And the only possibility of concrete action that presents itself to him is the killing of his uncle. He tries desperately to whip himself into doing this. But killing his uncle will not restore his father, it will not clean his mother, it will not make love once more wholesome. The poison is fatal; there is no cure. Realization that no cure is possible prevents Hamlet from applying the false cure of revenge, but because he is an idealist he cannot accept the impossibility of cure, and his realization consequently remains subconscious. While the King lives, Hamlet does not have to face this impossibility directly; he can still half-cling to the desperate illusion that revenge may partly heal his world. The killing of the King will remove Hamlet's last chance of escape from fully conscious, unbearable realization that his world is dead.

His desire to escape this realization is the sole and perfect motivation of his delay. Enraged, when he knows he is dying, at the prospect of his uncle's escaping him, he finally does kill the King. It is an act of pure passion, bringing him no satisfaction, no peace. Death is felicity; to live is to draw one's breath in pain. Horatio must live to tell Hamlet's story; for Hamlet himself, the rest is silence.

(Prof. Hutcheson, Ph.D. Yale, is best known for his Edition of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.)

obtained from the Editor at 77 Dean St., London, W. 1, England.

(Your editor has some specimen copies which he will send to prospective readers on application.)

**MISCELLANY**

**ACTIVITIES OF SNL READERS:** Prof. Alfred B. Harbage will leave Columbia to teach at Harvard next September . . . Clarence Derwent, President of Actors Equity and actor in 34 of Shakespeare's plays—more than any other actor past or present—has left New York to become artist-in-residence at Stanford U. where he will repeat the Shylock role (Nov. 8-11) he played at the U. of Kansas City last year. He hopes to persuade a New York producer to stage the *Merchant* on Broadway . . . Another eminent Shakespearean actor Charles Warburton, now with the American Broadcasting Co. has been elected Pres. of the Shakespeare Club of NY to suc-

ceed June Justice who resigned to make her home in Hollywood, Fla. . . . Mrs. Noel J. King also of the SCNY and her son Prof. William Appleton of Columbia visited London and Stratford last summer and saw more than half a dozen Shakespearean plays . . . Henry W. Corbett another member of the SCNY and senior architect of Rockefeller Center has been named recipient of the Americas Award for 1951. The award is given for outstanding service in the field of inter-American friendship . . . Father Lonergan's Chapel Players of St. John's College in Brooklyn, N. Y. will present *Richard II* on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 . . . Prof. Hans Rothe of the University of Miami has translated 22 of Shakespeare's plays into German since 1918. His translations are far closer to the originals than those of Schlegel and Tieck. They have been used in over 3000 productions .

# CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

## A MANUAL FOR NEO-RENAISSANCE DIRECTORS

Ronald Watkins' *On Producing Shakespeare* is, like C. B. Purdom's *Producing Shakespeare* (London, 1950), an important book written to explain in detail the currently accepted method of acting Shakespearean plays in the Elizabethan manner. What the Swan drawing was to Poel in the late 19th century, the work of John C. Adams of Hofstra is to Watkins. The Adams reconstruction of the Globe with its seven acting areas is utilized by Watkins as is his own experience producing plays in the Elizabethan manner at Harrow in England.

In his effort to get closer to Shakespeare, Watkins also adopts Richard Flatter's theory (*Shakespeare's Producing Hand*, Norton, N. Y., 1949) which accepts apparent irregularities of meter, line division, and punctuation as Shakespeare's own subtle direction to the actor speaking the lines. He also accepts, in spite of Chambers' strictures, T. W. Baldwin's actor assignments and prompter's duties as revealed in his *Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company*, (Urbana, 1927). Granville-Barker's *Prefaces* are also a formative influence.

On this fabric, and all of it cannot be accepted as definitive, Watkins proceeds to look over the prompter's shoulder and develop a series of fundamentals none of which would present insoluble problems if presented on a replica stage. Throughout the book Shakespeare is considered a master showman whose lines and stage-directions present enough material for the alert director. We are shown that for Shakespeare the principle was simplicity whereas today the direction tends to be complex.

Modern producers will find Watkins' work extremely stimulating; principles of staging are elaborated, acting traditions analyzed, and Shakespeare's stagecraft illustrated. Watkins admirably supplements the well illustrated text by supplying what he calls an "alternative commentary" on the text of *Macbeth* which is virtually a prompt book for a production of the play. Dr. Flatter has found the Folio version of this play particularly free of "editorial interference" and its choice as an example is therefore appropriate.

American attempts at Elizabethan staging have indicated that complete success is not dependent on the archaeological strictness favored by Watkins. The boy Ophelia and Gertrude recently cast by Watkins in the Harrow *Hamlet* were reported not too effective; but, if the "little eyases" gave trouble to Shakespeare in 1600, they may yet present some solutions to the growing number of neo-Renaissance producers. [W. W. Norton, N. Y., 1951].

**PARDONABLE ERROR:** Chinese visitors to Britain's Festival complained because they could not read a Chinese edition of Shakespeare which had been exhibited upside down.

## A HANDBOOK FOR PLAYGOERS

*Invitation to the Theatre* by Frank Hubert O'Hara and Marguerite Harmon Bro is an enlarged version of their *Handbook of Drama* originally published in 1938. The latter title accurately characterizes the contents of this useful book. The authors discuss the types of drama, enlarge on dramatic structure and technique, give a forty page survey of dramatic history, and supply a useful dictionary of terms. The text is well amplified with references to many plays. Although the individual subject headings are often too briefly discussed and sometimes become opaque unless the plays given as examples have been seen or read, the book should revitalize interest in a finer critical and aesthetic appreciation of the drama. [Harper & Brothers, N. Y., 1951]

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## THE NEW ARDEN SHAKESPEARE

The famed English Arden Edition of Shakespeare (Methuen, London) edited from 1879 to 1924 is now being reedited under the general editorship of Una Ellis-Fermor of Bedford College, London. Kenneth Muir has already reedited *Macbeth* and is now working on *King Lear*. In a *Manchester Guardian Weekly* review H. B. Charlton tempers his high praise of *Macbeth* by saying "that when it comes to the significance of the play for mortal men Mr. Muir lets the "relative-correlative" aesthetic run into mysticisms which sometimes, though not nearly so frequently as with the corybants of the creed, rise to sheer mumbo-jumbo."

## ANTHOLOGY OF HAMLET CRITICISM

*Readings on the Character of Hamlet* by Claude C. H. Williamson is one of those books which all Shakespeareans will like to have around for reference or browsing. It is a 771 page compilation which, in addition to anthologizing literature on the title subject, also gives such miscellaneous items as Sam Johnson's note on the "sleaded Polack," William Kelly's account of a riotous performance, Vachel Lindsay's "Hamlet, 1920," etc. Thirty pages cover the period to 1800, two hundred pages cover the 19th century, and over three hundred of the remaining five hundred pages cover the period from 1925 to 1947.

While we may not always find our favorite passages here, the author himself can usually be found. The eight pages from Bradley remind us that the book is more concerned with Hamlet the man than Hamlet the *dramatis personae*. Yet Hamlet, the "prince of philosophical speculators" to William Hazlitt and the "prince of poetical philosophers" to Charles Cowden Clarke, is well characterized. We can trace him as student or stoic, malcontent or madman, mother lover or mother hater, but we shall receive no assistance from Mr. Williamson. The compiler supplies no critical titles to the more than three hundred selections nor any critical comments except a brief "Postscript." How much more useful the book would have been had he classified the book under subdivisions such as Hamlet's Madness, Hamlet's Delay, Gertrude's Guilt, etc. Or perhaps J. Dover Wilson's eleven queries might have been answered (p. 600), or Prof. Alfred Harbage's twelve reasons for Hamlet's delay (p. 759) made a framework.

For teachers, students, and libraries, the book will have much value as a stepping stone through the vast Hamlet bibliography. Some of the passages are at least 6500 words in length and present effective portraits of "the darling of the English audience."

A revised edition, if called for, should correct numerous typographical errors. Chambren appears as *Chambrær*, Mary Colum as *May*, Roderick Eagle as *Robert*, Una Ellis-Fermor as *Uno*, Greg as *Gregg*, J. S. Smart as *J. E.*, Collins as *Collieg*, occulted as *occupted*, mirror as *mirrow*, etc. It might have been wise also, to have included the Wilson passage refuted by E. L. Ferguson (p. 380) and the Stoll selection analyzed by Clutton-Brock (p. 404). It would be interesting and useful to have such anthologies, more carefully and critically edited, for each play in the Shakespearean canon. [The Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1950.]

## COMPLETE TEXT CRITICALLY EDITED

Peter Alexander's new edition of the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* with introduction and glossary was published by Collins (London) on June 25th. The Folio order of the plays is followed. The text took seven years to edit and contains the result of much recent scholarship.

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# REVIEW of PERIODICALS

## WILSON AND THE UPSTART CROW

Janet Spens refutes the arguments of J. Dover Wilson's article in *Shakespeare Survey IV* ("Malone and the Upstart Crow") in which he concluded that "Greene was accusing Shakespeare definitely of having stolen the Henry VI trilogy, and that contemporaries understood Greene's words in this sense, so that Shakespeare and his friends thought it necessary to get Chettle to recant the accusation." In the fable of the crow, the crow got his feathers from many birds, therefore the accusation could only mean that Shakespeare's work was "a mass of borrowing"—and that is the argument of all disgruntled poasters, and certainly not a serious charge in Elizabethan times. The word *honesty* in the disputed passage means *honor* in Elizabethan parlance therefore the passage means only that Shakespeare was an honorable gentleman. There is no reference to honesty in the modern sense. Greene's hatred has been exaggerated; he is contemptuous but "much less bitter than Dr. Dover Wilson makes out." All Greene means is that as a *Johannes Factotum* Shakespeare is master of none. She smiles at Wilson's hypothesis of a threatening letter from Marlowe to Chettle and that Shakespeare and others went to Chettle to demand a retraction. Once Greene's influence was removed Chettle changed his opinion of Shakespeare and praised Shakespeare as Horace praised Virgil. ("Dr. Wilson and the Upstart Crow," *Times Literary Supplement*, June 15, p. 373.)

## WILSON EXPLAINS ENGLISH USAGE

In answering Dr. Spens J. Dover Wilson agrees that some words have changed their meanings but he insists that although *honesty* did refer to respectability when used of women, of men it had the same meaning as today. However, *uprightness* is the key word, not *honesty*, and that word used with *honesty* can only refer to "scrupulous integrity in one's action." And would men of rank describe a player as a *gentleman* in 1592? Greene did use the crow figure for literary appropriation and some lines on Greene published later indicate that the attack on Shakespeare was felt. On the speculation as to the reason for the retraction, Wilson admits that it is imaginative but probable. However, it can be omitted without affecting the argument. ("The Upstart Crow," *TLS*, June 29, p. 405.)

## THE CONTROVERSY CONCLUDED

(Because of the rationality of the following letter from Dr. Spens, the editor reprints it in its entirety.)

"Will you allow me a little space to say publicly how sorry I am to have given occasion to Dr. Dover Wilson to think I was contemptuous of his work? In fact I believe that he has done more than any scholar since A. C. Bradley to stimulate and revitalize the study of Shakespeare. But this great influence makes him very dangerous; young students and the 'general reader' are apt to remember his conjectures as authenticated fact, and the next generation to build on the insecure foundation." ("The Upstart Crow," *TLS*, July 6, p. 453.)

## SHAKESPEARE IN TRANSLATION

Prof. Hans Rothe of the University of Miami is convinced that Shakespeare is more effective when translated into a foreign language. He quotes a private conversation with Shaw in which the dramatist said that "Continents have the advantage" over English readers because they are ignorant of Elizabethan English and will not observe how poor their language has become in comparison. It is possible that Shakespeare is entirely lost to modern English audiences because "there might not be five hundred people living to whom SHAKESPEARE still speaks as he used to speak to his contemporaries,"—and that five hundred will be scholars. Therefore all readers are interpreters and may miss the entire significance of a speech. Changes in English are making Shakespeare obsolescent. Those who are stimulated by the author they are translating are disqualified as good translators; they become prophets who expound rather than translate. A translation must use language as an "obedient servant" and the translator to be good must incorporate "the translated works as a creative ingredient into the literature of the idiom wherein it makes its appearance." Theatre language changes rapidly. From 1770 to 1930 every decade has had at least one complete translation of Shakespeare. ("Translating Shakespeare," *International Theatre*, Spring, 1951, pp. 19-20.)

## AMERICAN ACTRESS ABROAD

Elizabeth N. Puknat interestingly records the story of American actress Charlotte Cushman who went to England to secure fame and fortune. She left on Oct. 26, 1844 aboard the *Garrick* after a farewell performance as Beatrice in *Much Ado*. After a triumph in Milman's *Fazio* she brought her family to England and with her sister Susan as Juliet and herself as Romeo prepared to convince the English audiences that she was "the best breeches figure in America." Her impassioned premier on Dec. 30, 1845 won her acclaim as the second Mrs. Siddons. In reply to those who tried to find an English heritage in her Walt Whitman wrote: "she is herself." ("Romeo was a Lady: Cushman's Triumph," *The Theatre Annual*, IX: 1951, pp. 59-69.)

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## SONNET 113

Doniphian Louthan unravels the crux in line 14 of Sonnet 113 [My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue] by reading *mine* as a phonetic pun on *m'eyne*. Thus "the speaker's mind is at once true and untrue. In seeing the beloved's features, regardless of what image the eyes present it with, the mind is faithful to the beloved, but hardly faithful to the facts. From another viewpoint, however, it is the eyes which are rendered liars." The first four lines of Sonnet 114 also say that "fidelity to the beloved has resulted in confusion of facts," but another alternative is that the mind changes the facts "with the result that they eyes would not seem to be liars" as they appear to be in Sonnet 113. ("Sonnet 113," *Times Literary Sup.*, July 6, p. 421.)

## BEGINNING A PLAY

J. C. Trewin's comments on plot openings includes remarks on Shakespeare's romances which he has recently seen. *The Winter's Tale* opening scene is needless and Peter Brook's *Phoenix* production cut it completely. If Shakespeare were writing for a modern audience his second scene in *The Tempest* might have made use of the telephone to break up the long narration. ("To Start a Plot," *John O'Lond's Weekly*, p. 440, July 20th.)

## ORIGINALITY IN PRODUCTION

In a stimulating and provocative discussion of the *King Lear* production last Spring, Wolf Heider, editor and publisher of the *International Theatre*, declares that Louis Calhern has shown himself to be Broadway's foremost director of classic drama and one of the "greatest sovereigns" in classic acting. The production overwhelms because no attempt was made to improve or adapt Shakespeare for that "famous fiction, the American Audience." Shakespeare is made intelligible "by a lucid demonstration of his thoughts." Calhern's *Lear* was classic in that "the author reigns supreme" and it was original in that unlike other amateur productions it did not attempt "to make theatrical history by twisting the work of the classic after another crackpot's visionary spleen." The originality of frustrated authors is unwarranted. Originality at the expense of the work interpreted is illustrated in Orson Welles' *Juliet Caesar*; originality in the handling of the means of expression is illustrated in Marc Blitzstein's cacophonous music to *Lear*; and originality at odds with the original is illustrated in Sir Laurence Olivier's roguish and lovable *Lear* in the first scene. Calhern's *Lear*, however, had innate and unconscious originality which makes for uniqueness. *Lear*'s madness is perfectly illustrated when he plucks an invisible feather from the air and places it over Cordelia's lips. It is such perfection of detail which makes the performance a memorable one. ("Broadway Conquers Shakespeare," *International Theatre*, Spring, 1951, pp. 23-29.)

## BAWDY PUNS IN SHAKESPEARE

Prof. Helge Kokeritz of Yale brings his knowledge of linguistics to bear on four of Shakespeare's passages in *I Henry IV* and *Cymbeline* and discovers in three of them bawdy puns which either add to the humor of the passage or serve to delineate character. To Prince Hal's remark (III.3.208) that he has procured Falstaff a "Charge of Foot," the fat knight replies: "I would it had beene of Horse. Where shall I find one that can steale well? O, for a fine theefe of two and twentie, or thereabout: I am heynously unprovided." In this passage *horse* is said to pun on whores and *steale* on stale, as it was actually pronounced. *Theefe* is dialect for a "young woman." ("Thief and Stealer," *English and Germanic Studies*, Vol. III, 1949-50, pp. 57-60.)

## SAVAGE SPECTACLE EXPLAINED

Prof. Brents Sterling of the U. of Washington shows how Shakespeare developed the 16th century idea of Brutus' mental conflict by means of a dramatic insight which made him select as his theme, only partially derived or inferred from Plutarch, the idea of incantation and ritual—the idea that the murder of Caesar is a sacrificial rite, a formal sacrifice necessary for the wellbeing of the state. Thus dignified, Brutus will accept the assassin's role. "We shall be called purgers, not murderers." In *Antony*, Shakespeare presents the "dramatic reversal of the plan to sanctify" bloodshed. The sparing of *Antony*, and Brutus' insistence that *Antony* speak at the funeral is that which, as Plutarch said, "marred all." *Antony*'s oratorical sarcasm is the "counter-ritual" which successfully removes all that tends to sublimate the murder. "Dramatic craftsmanship is therefore integrated with characterization and the two combine to state the political philosophy implicit in the play." ("Or Else This Were a Savage Spectacle," *PMLA*, LXVI.5, pp. 765-74, September, 1951.)

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